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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the planning and implementation of a Staff Development Program for teachers and administrators in the 22 school systems served by MEC (Merrimack Education Center). This program, which provided in-service learning experiences for educational practitioners, is discussed following an introductory statement. Information concerning program development includes the historical background of the program, the in-service commission, needs assessment, collaboration with local colleges, an evaluation model, and possible program directions for the future. Appendixes with related program material and a 14-item bibliography are included. (MJM)

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AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO
PUBLIC SCHOOL STAFF DEVELOPMENT

A COLLABORATIVE MODEL

June 30, 1972

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Introduction

This paper describes the planning and implementation of a Staff Development Program for teachers and administrators in the twenty-two school systems served by the Merrimack Education Center. The Center, known as MEC, began operation in 1966 as a regional center for educational innovation under a grant from Title III of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

Since its inception, MEC, under the directorship of Dr. Richard J. Lavin, has taken as its mission the introduction and support of innovative educational approaches within the communities it serves. It has fostered collaboration among the participating school systems and has functioned as a middleman, or broker, between its communities and needed educational product and service resources in the state and nation.

The Staff Development Program, which is but one of the many projects undertaken by MEC, is a good example of a collaborative model among the participating school systems and between the school systems and outside educational institutions, with MEC serving in a coordinating and guiding role.

The Staff Development Program

During the 1971-1972 school year, nearly six-hundred elementary and secondary teachers, administrators, and office personnel from more than twenty local communities have participated in a unique staff development program sponsored jointly by the Merrimack Education Center, Fitchburg State College, Fitchburg, Mass., and Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, Mass.

The purpose of the program has been to provide timely in-service learning experiences for educational practitioners that will keep them abreast of new educational concepts and techniques and will help them become more effective on the job.

Sixteen courses have been offered during the past school year. Appendix A lists the program offerings and enrollments during 1971-72. Appendix B shows the participating communities and the enrollment by school system. Appendix C contains a brief description of each program offered.

Participants could elect to receive graduate credit through Fitchburg College for successful completion of many of these courses. The office personnel course carried undergraduate credit through Northern Essex Community College.

Programs were designed in response to a thorough needs assessment study in the communities served, and they were developed through

consultation with members of an In-Service Commission made up of local educators.

In-Service Commission

In order to foster collaboration among the communities served by MEC in the area of Staff Development, an In-Service Commission, made up of an administrator from each school system, was formed in January, 1971. Its stated goals were to provide continuous needs assessment to design, develop, and present high quality regional in-service educational programs; and to support the development of local in-service courses.

This In-Service Commission has met periodically to share information relating to local and regional Staff Development programs and courses, to act as a two-way communication link regarding needs assessment data, and to set policy for regional staff development program offerings.

Needs Assessment

The basic premise of the MEC Staff Development Program is that learning experiences should be designed to meet the real needs of the participants. Beginning in October, 1970, MEC has administered a Needs Assessment Survey to all the teachers and administrators in its communities on an annual basis. Appendix D shows a sample page from

the Second Annual Assessment of Needs, which was administered in the fall of 1971. The results of the survey were compiled by total region, by school system, and by individual school within each system. The regional data formed the basis for the planning of Staff Development programs to be presented throughout the MEC region in locations where high needs were expressed. Local data was fed back to each community through the members of the In-Service Commission to be used for local in-service planning.

Collaboration with Local Colleges

In order to support the collaborative model of Staff Development based on periodic needs assessment, the Graduate and Continuing Studies Division of Fitchburg State College, under the leadership of Dr. John F. Nash, agreed to grant graduate credits for programs which meet graduate study requirements. The opportunity for teachers and administrators to receive credit toward advanced degrees while satisfying their expressed learning needs greatly enhanced the value of the Staff Development Program.

A similar collaborative relationship has been entered into with Northern Essex Community College. A course for educational office personnel, carrying three undergraduate credits has recently been offered.

Evaluation Model

MEC has an evaluation procedure which is designed to measure the effectiveness of each program and to provide feedback for future program development. This procedure is not meant to replace or to interfere with any evaluation procedures the instructor may wish to use. The MEC evaluation procedure consists of the following parts: (A) "Staff Development Feedback Sheet"; (B) "Objectives Feedback Form."

A. "Staff Development Feedback Sheet." A copy of this form is found in Attachment E. It is to be filled out by course participants at least twice during the program: near the middle (session 6) and at the end (session 12). It may be used more often if desired. This one-page form is designed to aid the instructor, as well as to provide feedback data to MEC. Appendix F shows a summary of student ratings of the MEC Staff Development Programs in the areas of the extent to which each program met their learning needs and the extent to which participants were able to apply their learnings back on their jobs.

B. "Objectives Feedback Form." In addition to the "Staff Development Feedback Sheet," which provides data regarding participants' overall reactions to the course, the "Objectives Feedback Form" measures the extent to which each course objective was achieved. An example of an "Objectives Feedback Form" is shown in Appendix G.

Future Directions

The collaborative model of Staff Development has been very well received by teachers and administrators in the MEC region and, judging from the feedback from participants and school administrators, has met a real educational need. Plans are underway to expand the use of the Needs Assessment Survey to include other communities served by Fitchburg State College, to develop "program clusters" which would enable participants to earn graduate study certificates, and to introduce innovative courses in the "field" curriculum. Possible future directions include collaboration with other colleges and universities in the area, the establishment of an Associate Degree program in school administration, educational counselling services for program participants, and the involvement of parents and other community members in the needs assessment process and in the developmental programs themselves.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Merrimack Education Center

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Program Offerings and Enrollment
1971 - 1972 School Year

Program#	Title	ENROLLMENT		
		Fall, 1971	Spring, 1972	Total
ME 901	The Teacher's Role in Motivating Students	24	--	24
ME 902	Individualizing Instruction	18	25	43
ME 903	Innovative Instructional Materials	55*	--	55
ME 904	Learning in the Open Classroom	18	--	18
ME 905	Creative Use of Media	17	85	102
ME 906	Introduction to the Open Concept High School	54	--	54
ME 907	Successful Education Practices	24**	28	52
ME 908	Environmental Education	--	17	17
ME 909	Administrative Process in the Educational System	--	18	18
ME 910	Innovations in Secondary Education	--	20	20
ME 911	Strategies for Teaching in the Open Concept High School	--	29	29
ME 912	Helping the Underachiever	--	11	11
ME 913	Strategies for Learning Disabilities	--	66	66
ME 914	Individualizing Reading Instruction	--	37	37
-----	The Role of Educational Office Personnel	--	17	17
TOTALS		210	353	563

* Number includes 9 participants who enrolled for 1/3 or 2/3 of this program.

** Number does not include 22 participants who enrolled for individual sessions of this program.

APPENDIX B

STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

11

Enrollments by School System
1971-1972 School Year

ENROLLMENT

SCHOOL SYSTEMS	Fall, 1971			Spring, 1972			Totals		
	F*	M*	T*	F	M	T	F	M	T
Andover	0	4	4	4	8	12	4	12	16
Bedford	0	0	0	2	7	9	2	7	9
Billerica	24	13	37	34	1	35	58	14	72
Carlisle	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	2
Chelmsford	12	3	15	13	1	14	25	4	29
Groton/Dunstable	1	0	1	3	2	5	4	2	6
Lawrence	0	0	0	33	6	39	33	6	39
Littleton	4	0	4	3	3	6	7	3	10
Lunenburg	0	3	3	13	21	34	13	24	37
Methuen	4	2	6	10	10	20	14	12	26
Nashoba Tech.	0	0	0	0	4	4	0	4	4
No. Andover	34	14	48	23	10	33	57	24	81
No. Middlesex	1	23	24	4	9	13	5	32	37
Reading	1	3	4	10	9	19	11	12	23
Shawsheen Tech.	0	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	1
Tewksbury	27	5	32	38	0	38	65	5	70
Tynsboro	6	5	11	15	2	17	21	7	28
Westford	6	8	14	7	6	13	13	14	27
Wilmington	2	1	3	8	5	13	10	6	16
Outside Region	1	2	3	20	6	26	21	8	29
TOTALS	124	86	210	241**	111	352	365**	197	562

*F = Fitchburg Credit; M = MEC Credit; T = Total

**Includes 12 persons taking Program Credit through Northern Essex Community College, Haverhill, Massachusetts

APPENDIX C

MERRIMACK EDUCATION CENTER
STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Program Descriptions

ME 901 - THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN MOTIVATING STUDENTS
(Secondary Teachers)

Participants will diagnose their students' motivational level, learn how to set motivational goals, and conduct projects to increase their students' motivation in school.

Contents: Definitions of motivation; current approaches to motivational theory; factors that enhance and depress motivation; methods of diagnosing the motivational level of students; approaches for increasing students' motivation; managing the classroom climate.

ME 902 - INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION (Elementary Teachers)

Participants will develop strategies for individualizing instruction in different curriculum areas, will investigate a variety of methods and materials for individualizing instruction, and will adapt materials and methods for use in their own classrooms.

Contents: Introduction to differentiated instruction, composition planning, word usage approach to spelling, individualizing reading instruction, developing learning packages in reading skills, pupil reporting skills in social studies, use of simulation techniques, an inquiry approach to science, use of media in individualizing instruction. A number of demonstration films will be shown throughout the program.

ME 903 - INNOVATIVE INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS
(Elementary Teachers)

Participants will learn about new instructional materials in their fields of interest, do research in instructional materials, and use innovative materials in their classrooms.

Contents: This program will be conducted in three areas of four sessions each: (1) Reading and Social Studies; (2) Mathematics and Science; and (3) Arts and Crafts, and Music and Dance. In each area, participants will learn about new approaches and materials they can use without waiting for major organizational change decisions.

ME 904 - LEARNING IN THE OPEN CLASSROOM (Elementary Teachers and Administrators)

Participants will experience an open classroom, explore some of the techniques of setting up and maintaining an open classroom, and work with a wide variety of materials designed to allow students to learn in different styles.

Contents: Background and theory of the open classroom; methods and techniques of working with materials in reading and mathematics as well as other areas; exploration of the teacher-student relationship in an open classroom; and problems and strategies of implementing open classroom techniques.

ME 905 - CREATIVE USE OF MEDIA (Elementary and Secondary Teachers)

Participants will learn about various types of audio-visual media; design strategies for using media in their teaching; and plan and produce instructional materials for use in their classrooms.

Contents: Rationale for the use of audio-visual media; work sessions in the use of various kinds of media (i. e., record player, tape recorder, film strips, 16 mm movies, overhead projector, slides, camera, television, charts and displays).

ME 906 - INTRODUCTION TO THE OPEN CONCEPT HIGH SCHOOL (Secondary Teachers and Administrators)

Participants will explore the underlying philosophy of the open concept high school, discuss and assess the various components of open concept education, develop a working definition of the open concept high school, and formulate implementation plans as warranted.

Contents: Philosophy and goals of the open concept high school, components of open concept schools (i. e., flexible scheduling, team teaching, schools without walls, etc.), the role of the teacher and administrator in an open concept high school, change strategies for moving toward an open concept high school.

ME 907 - SUCCESSFUL EDUCATIONAL PRACTICES (Elementary Teachers)

Participants will observe and experience a variety of programs and projects that have proven successful in the classroom, and apply appropriate techniques to their own teaching situation.

Contents: Elementary school teachers from the MEC region will share ideas, methods, and techniques they have used successfully in the classroom. Teaching materials and lesson plans will be available for participants to experience and to use or modify for use in their own teaching.

ME 908 - ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES IN ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION (Designed primarily for teachers of grades 4 to 8; teachers of grades 1 to 3 may attend if they desire subject matter background)

Participants will gain a variety of experiences in elementary aspects of the environment which will enable them to conduct interesting and profitable field trips, classroom lessons, and individual projects related to the environment.

Contents: Background information and innovative approaches to aspects of the environment such as wildflowers, insects, freshwater plants and animals, rocks, minerals, and glaciation of the Andover region. Participants will engage in an independent or group project in one or more of the following areas: mammal trapping and population study, dandelion ecology, quadrat study, fish population study, soil chemistry, freshwater succession, reptile and amphibian population study, contour mapping, transects, seed dispersal, water pollution.

ME 909 - THE ADMINISTRATIVE PROCESS IN THE EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM (Educational Administrators)

Participants will examine contemporary theories of administration from a systems point of view, will participate in exercises relating to administrative problems, and will develop ways of incorporating new insights into their own administrative practices.

Contents: Contemporary theories of administration, including goal-setting, planning, accountability, coordinating human resources, and decision making. Individual and group exercises will be directed to the practicing administrator. The course is open to all levels of administrators, coordinators, and supervisors.

ME 910 - INNOVATIONS IN SECONDARY EDUCATION (Secondary Teachers and Administrators)

Participants will explore innovative approaches to secondary education and their impact on educational planning, and will develop strategies for incorporating innovative ideas into their own teaching or administrative practices.

Contents: Innovations in secondary education (i. e., differentiated staffing, interdisciplinary teaching approaches, innovations in student scheduling, "open" education, gaming and simulation methods, motivational techniques, evaluation procedures); impact of educational philosophy, objectives, and methodologies on educational planning; relevance of educational innovation in the planning and design of new school facilities.

ME 911 - STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING IN THE OPEN CONCEPT HIGH SCHOOL (Secondary Teachers)

Participants will learn the components of open concept education through experiencing them. They will explore the meaning of "open concept" in their particular subject-matter area, and will develop approaches and techniques for use in their own classrooms.

Contents: Rationale for openness in education, effects of grades on student learning, setting meaningful learning objectives, establishing individual learning contracts, use of problem-solving techniques, using the community as a resource, strategies for sharing the responsibility for learning, setting learning priorities, the role of the mini-course in open concept education.

ME 912 - WORKSHOP IN HELPING THE UNDERACHIEVER
(Secondary Teachers)

Participants will identify factors that may contribute to students' under-achievement in high school, learn methods of diagnosing student needs, explore the role of the teacher in providing a motivating learning climate, and develop strategies and methods for working effectively with under-achieving students.

Contents: Factors contributing to lack of student achievement, methods of diagnosing student needs, ways of creating a motivational learning climate, the student-teacher relationship, discipline and student achievement, strategies for working with underachieving students. •

ME 913 - STRATEGIES FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES
(Elementary Teachers)

Participants will become familiar with instructional programming for working with children with learning disabilities. They will investigate specific strategies, methods, and programs for various types of learning disabilities in the areas of auditory, visual and perceptual motor skills.

ME 914 - WORKSHOP ON INDIVIDUALIZING READING INSTRUCTION
(Elementary Teachers)

Participants will gain assistance in developing classroom techniques for individualizing reading instruction according to specific learning needs, will develop skill in informal diagnosis of reading problems, and will learn methods of evaluating pupil progress in reading by means of observation and performance testing.

"THE ROLE OF EDUCATIONAL OFFICE PERSONNEL"

Purpose: Education in the 70's will be marked by innovative concepts and dramatic changes. Those employed in educational organizations need to keep abreast of these innovations and to further develop their skills to support such changes. This program has been designed to help fill this need.

Objectives: Participants in this program will have the opportunity of developing their knowledge and skills in the areas of new trends in educational office management, ways of increasing personal job effectiveness, and the human relations aspects of work in an educational office.

APPENDIX D

Merrimack Education Center

Annual Assessment of Needs

SAMPLE PAGE

Directions:

On the following pages are listed a number of topics which are commonly employed in the contemporary world of education. Your responses will indicate the degree of importance these areas hold in the Merrimack Valley. Indicate your familiarity and degree of interest by circling a number from 1-6.

1 means NO familiarity and/or interest, while 6 means an EXTREMELY HIGH DEGREE of familiarity and/or interest.

I Teachers (K-8)

<i>Master Code Ref.</i>	<i>Buzz Word</i>	<i>To what extent are you familiar with the meaning of this topic?</i>	<i>To what extent do you desire more familiarity with this topic?</i>
1.	Community Involvement (Techniques - Feed back)	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
2.	Bi-Lingual Education	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
4.	Tests and Measurements	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
5.	Teaching Reading	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
6.	Instructional Innovations	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
8.	Slow Learner	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
9.	Remedial Reading	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
10.	Humanities	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
11.	Environmental Education	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6
12.	Career Awareness	1 2 3 4 5 6	1 2 3 4 5 6

APPENDIX E

MERRIMACK EDUCATION CENTERStaff Development ProgramFeedback Sheet

Title of Program _____ Date _____

1. To what extent do you feel this program is meeting your learning needs? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at All								Extremely Well

2. To what extent do you feel you will be able to apply your learning from this program in your work? (Circle one number)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Not at All								Extremely Well

3. Check all of the words in the following list that describe your feelings at this point in the program: (Write in other words as appropriate.)

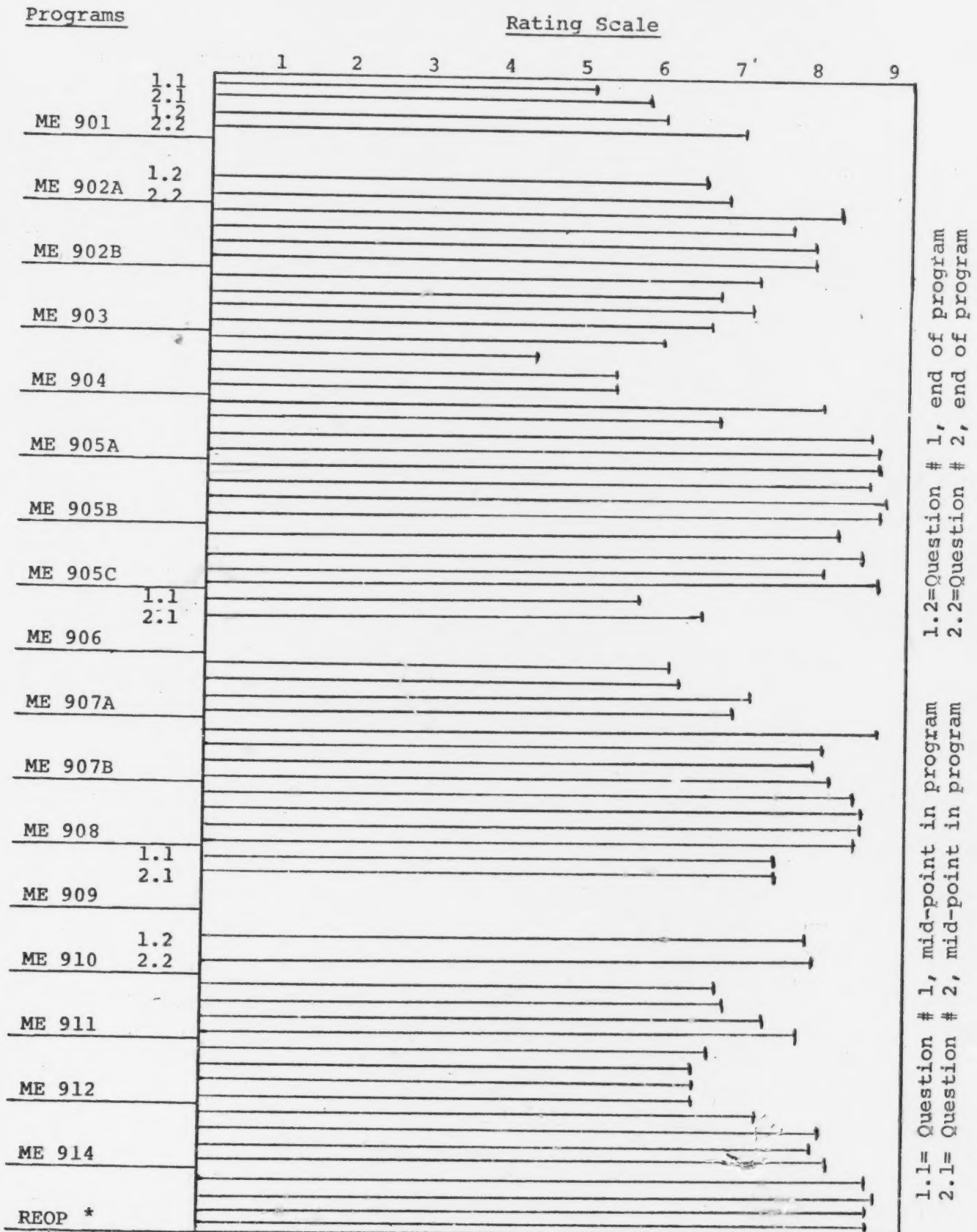
☐ Angry	☐ Annoyed	☐ Anxious	☐ Bored
☐ Confident	☐ Confused	☐ Contented	☐ Depressed
☐ Discouraged	☐ Elated	☐ Exhausted	☐ Frustrated
☐ Happy	☐ Hopeful	☐ Interested	☐ Joyful
☐ Motivated	☐ Optimistic	☐ Pessimistic	☐ Pleased
☐ Satisfied	☐ Stimulated	☐ Successful	☐ Threatened
☐ Troubled	☐ Worried		

4. What have been the most useful parts of the program for you?

5. If you could change this program in order to make it more useful for participants, what change(s) would you make?
(Use the other side of this sheet if necessary)

APPENDIX F

SUMMARY OF PARTICIPANT RATINGS (MEDIAN) ON QUESTIONS 1 AND 2
ON THE "STAFF DEVELOPMENT FEEDBACK SHEET"



* The Role of Educational Office Personnel

APPENDIX G

THE TEACHER'S ROLE IN MOTIVATING STUDENTS

OBJECTIVES FEEDBACK FORM

Listed below are the objectives for this course. Next to each objective, please circle one number to indicate how well that objective has been achieved for you personally. (1 means "not at all"; 6 means "extremely well"). Add any comments you may wish.

<u>PROGRAM OBJECTIVES</u>	<u>HOW WELL ATTAINED FOR ME</u>					
1. To create situations and experiences which will arouse the motivation of course participants.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. To provide an overview of theories and methods of motivation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. To explore the role of a teacher in the area of student motivation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. To enable participants to diagnose and evaluate their own concepts and practices in the area of motivation.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. To encourage each participant to research an area of motivation which is meaningful to him.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. To enable each participant to implement a motivational project on the job.	1	2	3	4	5	6

COMMENTS:

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